

Wednesday – July 15, 2015

Leanne Kurtz
Research Analyst
Legislative Services Division
Rm. 111-A, State Capitol

Re: Written comments via mail regarding the interim Education and Local Government Committee regarding
SJR 21 Study of Local Fire and Emergency Services.

Dear Ms. Kurtz

I am submitting my written comments via an email to you, since I will not be able to attend the hearing on this subject matter for Thursday – July 16, 2015 with other comments with work.

Based on the language of SJR 21 - Study of Local Fire and Emergency Services, I would ask that the committee please in the future as part of the agenda items pertaining to this specific legislative language consider additional perspectives that would involve landowners that are affected by the State County Cooperative program, those in the private sector that are involved in contracting issues with DNRC and other federal agencies, that are affected by the training standards for wildfire suppression under the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG).

The language in the representative legislation affects all levels of services regarding local governments, state and federal agencies, the private sector involved in wildland fire suppression, Board of Trustees of Rural Fire Districts, Fire Service Fee Area's and volunteer fire companies regarding training standards for EMS, Structure, Hazmat, Specialized technical operations, and wildland fire suppression.

My family ranching operations is involved with significant amount of classified forest acreage, that supports the forest fire protection assessment programs with DNRC, that funds both Direct and Affidavit protection; lies within the legal boundaries of the Canyon Creek Rural Fire District, that has stationed for the past 30 years a county cooperative wildland engine as part of the State County Cooperative program, and the issues of workers compensation coverage, along with involvement as a District volunteer fire chief, Board of Trustee of the Canyon Creek Rural Fire District, involvement with the DNRC fire suppression and pre-suppression programs; working with private wildland fire contractors within Region One, that includes Montana, for wildland fire suppression training and equipment standards.

The work that was done in the past on the "Price of Flames" addressed some of the same issues upon the review of SJR 21 and need to continue to be addressed in the future.

Thank-you for the opportunity to submit written comments and will continue to monitor the work of the committee, to provide additional written comments in the future.

Sincerely;

/s/ Richard E. Grady
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cc: Edward J. Grady – Former House of Representative – Montana Legislature

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